



A SHORT
HISTORY
OF
BOADICEA,
The BRITISH QUEEN.

[Price Six-pence.]



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OF

BOYDICEA



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BOADICEA, ^N
The BRITISH QUEEN.

Being the STORY on which the
NEW TRAGEDY,

Now in Rehearsal at the
Theatre Royal in *Drury Lane*,
IS FOUNDED.

Very proper to be bound up with the PLAY.

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MDCCLXV.



A SHORT
HISTORY
OF
BOADICEA,
The BRITISH QUEEN.



S the expectation of the town
is greatly rais'd by the intel-
ligence given in the public
papers, That a new tragedy,
founded upon the story of Boadicea, will
shortly make it's appearance upon the
theatre royal in Drury-Lane; and-writ-

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ten by an author, who has not only given proofs of an uncommon genius in poetry, but also of great worth, in the station of life he is plac'd in: I say, a tragedy of this kind, upon the ancient liberty of Britons, executed by such an author, cannot but raise an eager desire in every English heart, to be warm'd by scenes which will bring before 'em the ancient heroism of our country; which was at that time struggling against the Roman power, and boldly defending their liberties against foreign subjection.

It was therefore thought, from these many considerations, that a succinct account of the character and sufferings of the heroine, who gives name to the play, would be no unwelcome entertainment, before the representation.

Iceni, of which Prasutagus was king and Boadicea queen, call'd afterwards East-Anglia, comprehended the counties now known by the names of Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridge and Huntingdon.

Suetonius

Suetonius Paulinus, lieutenant-general of the Romans, after many alternate defeats and victories between them and the Britons, advanc'd with a large army, as far as Mona, (now stil'd the isle of Anglesey). a very populous place ; being the common receptacle of those who had been drove from their native dwellings in the former engagements, when Didius, Verannius, &c. commanded the Roman powers.

Suetonius caus'd flat-bottom'd boats to be made, to convey his foot over the little river that parts the island from the opposite shore ; and his horse waded, or swam after them. The approaching army soon alarm'd the inhabitants of Mona, who all assembled and marched towards the shore. The men were arm'd with desperate weapons, and the women ran, with lighted torches in their hands, array'd in frightful habits ; which, with their loose hair flying wildly about their shoulders, made 'em look like so many furies just broke from hell. The Druids accompany'd 'em, with lifted hands, invoking

voking heaven ; but with such hideous noise, that gave their invocations more the sound of profanation than religion.

Whether they did this with a politic view, to terrify the Romans from advancing ; or whether their real fear threw 'em into these shocking agitations, is not certain : But all authors agree, that at their appearance the Romans stood aghast, and would have retir'd without compleating their design.

But Suetonius, who had not that timid apprehension some of his soldiers had, in a long speech to his legions, represented the Britons in so ridiculous a light, calling 'em lunatic and riotous vagrants, and other names of contempt ; which so animated his men, that they fell furiously upon 'em, ended some with the sword, others they threw on heaps, and consum'd 'em in their own fires.

After this defeat Suetonius, to secure his conquest, and prevent all future attacks from the Britons of Mona, destroy'd all their places of superstitious worship (where they
us'd,

us'd, in barbarous ceremony, to sacrifice their sons, daughters, mothers, or fathers, in hopes to gain an insight into their future fortunes) built garrisons all round, and did intend to leave a sufficient number of troops to keep the place in perpetual subjection; but was diverted from his purpose by a desperate rising of the Icenians, who had rais'd a formidable body, and were marching to meet the Romans; having first made solemn vows not to give quarter, nor spare a Roman in their power.

Boadicea, assisted by Venusius, a Trinobantian prince, commanded this body. The reason of her particular wrath, was not owing only to the insults which the Britons in general had receiv'd at Mona and other parts, but to the wrongs her own family had suffer'd from the inhuman Romans.

The Trinobantes (by the best account we gain from ancient history) inhabited that part of Briton, now known by the names of Middlesex and Essex; and took their name from the old British word

word Tre-nant, implying towns or houses in a valley : For, indeed, the whole country lies directly all along upon the level, by the Thames side. This cannot be affirm'd as fact, yet we have this likelihood ; for those that inhabited Gallovidia in Scotland, lying in a vale, were call'd in British Noantes and Novantes : And the ancient people, nam'd Nantuates, liv'd about Le Vault, or the vale of the Rhine, and took their name from thence.

Tacitus has given us the following tale of Boadicea's sufferings, and the reasons she had for such implacable revênge.

Praſutagus, husband of Boadicea, tir'd with the perpetual differences between his people and the Romans (being very rich and of a peaceable disposition) sometime before his death, in order to secure ſucceſſion to his children, made Cæſar coheir with his two daughters ; which Cæſar readily accepted, and promis'd protection to him and all his race. But far other was the conſequence ; for Praſutagus was no ſooner dead, than the Romans, under colour of over-ſeeing and taking

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taking possession of the emperor's new inheritance, gave his kingdom up a prey to the centurions, his house and riches to the voracious officers, and his people they us'd like slaves, as they had been taken by force of arms. The richest of his subjects they drove from their dwellings, seiz'd their estates; and, in order to give some countenance to their cruelty, gave out it was so order'd by the last testament of Prasutagus, their late king: Seiz'd also on the new colony of Camalodunum, destroy'd their houses, cattle and property, and term'd 'em slaves and vassals.

Boadicea, fir'd with her own wrongs, and spurr'd on by her suffering subjects, demanded of the Roman leaders reparations for the injuries committed; but, instead of redress, her complaints were call'd rebellious, against the testament of her deceas'd husband, and in opposition to her allies the Romans.

Under these pretences, they took an opportunity of exercising their cruelty. They seiz'd on Boadicea, and her two daugh-

daughters; and, while the queen was whipt in publick through the streets, her daughters suffer'd violation from the Roman soldiers; while her defenceless subjects stood by and saw the inhuman outrage, without daring to oppose or vindicate the royal race.

These injuries done to Boadicea, soon reach'd the Trimobantes, and Venusius, their leader; who, at the intercession of his people, resolv'd to join with this ill-treated queen, and seek revenge upon the Romans. At his approach, back'd by a numerous army, the Icenians shook off the fear the Roman cruelty had thrown upon 'em, and all resolv'd to justify their rights, and revenge their injur'd monarch.

The rumour of this new ally a little dismay'd the cruel Romans, and Suetonius began to repent of his late rashness; but, being of an undaunted spirit, he summon'd his legions, and gain'd the hills adjacent to Iceni, resolv'd to try the fortune of a pitch'd battle; in which he had hitherto been successful, though against

against unequal numbers : For his men were true veterans, and well disciplin'd in war.

Soon as Venusius join'd the numbers Boadicea had rais'd, nought but shouts were heard ; feastings, and signs of joy were seen in every street, while the Roman power stood trembling at the approaching storm.

On the third day Boadicea, and her new ally, march'd forth amidst the acclamations of the Icenians and Trinobantians, to seek the enemy ; who, at Suetonius's command, (tho' unwilling) drew out to meet 'em.

Venusius began the onset, with a furious attack, upon Decianus, who commanded the left wing. The Romans cou'd not stand the shock, but fled, in the utmost confusion ; while Boadicea made such havock in the right, that story scarce can parallel. Some flew to the temple they had erected, and made some small defence, but Boadicea's fury soon took it by storm ; and, spite of the prayers of men,

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the tears of women, and cries of children, put all to the sword, and then bury'd 'em in the ruins of the temple. Petilius Cerealis, coming with a small party to succour those fled to the temple, was in his way meet by Venusius; and he, with all his men, partook the general fate.

Suetonius, not at all dismay'd at the defeat of the army, nor stung with the exulting pride of Boadicea and her colleague, found means, thro' all his enemies, to march to London, which was principally inhabited by the Romans; and, even then, a place of great resort and traffick. This he intended, as his friends were numerous, to make the seat of war. The inhabitants here receiv'd him not with that eagerness he expected. They were not backward in supporting him, and his shatter'd troops; but were not willing to enlist themselves, in order to a future attempt upon Mona, and the other places the Britons had retaken, by the success of the last engagement.

However,

However, he got some few recruits, and determin'd to march back towards Icenia. Boadicea and her forces were all this while concerting new conquests. They did not wait to assail castles and small forts, but proceeded directly where most treasure, and stronger holds were to be obtain'd. Nor was their policy bad, for about this time Seneca (that man, whose morals are now read with rapture) having formerly, by the instigation of Nero, drawn the Britons into borrowing large sums of him, upon proposals of easy payment, now at once demanded the whole sum; which so exasperated the Icenians, who had power in their hands, that they determin'd to make the Roman colonies defray this vast expence.

Thus urg'd, Verulam, a free Roman settlement, became a prey to their (avarice, I can't call it) necessity. The town gallantly defended itself; but, being overcome, the Britons put (according to their former proceedings against the Romans) all to the sword, and above seventy thousand Romans, and their associates, fell in the massacre.

massacre. None were spar'd, none ransom'd, but all tasted of an immediate, or a lingering death: Nor cruelty, that revenge, or the insolence of success could suggest to them, was omitted. The Roman matrons were hung up, and (as some authors say) their breasts cut off, and sew'd to their mouths; that, in the horrid pangs of death, they might seem to eat their own flesh: While the Britons celebrated their success in the temple of Andate, their goddess of victory, and feasted their revengeful eyes upon the Romans miseries.

The Britons here forgot themselves; for, instead of revelling for what was past, they should have taken precaution against what was to come. Nor were their riots only serviceable to Suetonius, who was all this time collecting troops to recover his fallen fame, but detrimental to their own force: For, when they were heated with wine, frequent disputes arose between the Icenians and Trinobantes, and many private frays happen'd between them; till at length the parties on both sides grew so violent, that a general action had ensu'd,
had

had not their leaders, Venusius and Boadicea, been inform'd of their animosity.

The argument first began, which did the most service in the field. The Trinobantes insisted that the success of the day was owing to the bravery and conduct of Venusius, their general; nor were the Icenians less partial, in giving the whole action to Boadicea.

The decision of this dispute was left to the two leaders; the beginners of the contest on each side summon'd to appear, where Boadicea and Venusius sat as judges of their differences.

The disputants had no sooner set forth their complaints, than a passion rose in Boadicea's breast, which was plainly pictur'd in her face, against the Trinobantians. She call'd for instant redress; and, in commanding accents, bid Venusius do her justice on those base cowards, who had traduc'd her glory, and her soldiers; adding, " They want, by this base falsehood, " to level my courage, and my valiant " veterans, to their poor distant attack " upon

“ upon the field of battle ; and, beneath
 “ the blind of prudence, would conceal
 “ their fear.”

This rash, ungrateful reflection, turn'd
 the eyes of all the Trinobantes upon their
 general ; and a murmur that ran among
 them, shew'd how much they resented this
 treatment from a queen, whose cause they
 had espous'd, and whose present glory
 sprang from their bravery.

Venusius, though of a calm, determin'd
 nature, could not see this insult of him-
 self, and his brave foldiers, without stand-
 ing up in their defence. He made a
 speech, in which he applauded the emula-
 tion the joint-allies had for glory ; and,
 to heighten that glory they aspir'd to, he
 recommended concord and mutual friend-
 ship ; adding, “ That when two different
 “ powers attack a common enemy, if each
 “ aspires to out-do the other, emulation
 “ then turns colleague with the foe ; and
 “ victory is lost, by the rash bravery of
 “ the contending parties.”

Venusius

Venusius not taking part with the enrag'd and haughty Boadicea, inflam'd her beyond all bounds; and this meeting, which was intended to reconcile the differences of their soldiers, ended in a breach of amity between the leaders.

This dispute occasion'd many scenes of horror; for the soldiers on each party, finding no redress from their superiors, sought to revenge themselves, and many skirmishes ensu'd. Boadicea too, being of a bloody disposition, not being able to execute her will in full, sought private revenge upon some of the chief of the Trinobantians; way-laid and destroy'd some, and others threw in chains: While Venusius, to appease his soldiers, seiz'd on the authors of those violences, try'd, and condemn'd some for the murder of his subjects.

Suetonius had intelligence of these jars among the Britons, and made advantage of it; for, while they lay inactive in their tents, by private feuds lessening their strength, he was active in drawing

drawing forces from all the Roman colonies, 'till at length he advanced with a numerous army towards the British camp.

Venusius, rous'd by this unexpected approach of the Romans, instantly put all his Trinobantians into form of battle, and sent advice to Boadicea to do the same and meet him before the dawn of day. The Romans, seeing the enemy forming, advanc'd to meet 'em. The attack was fierce and desperate, but conquest soon declar'd for Suetonius: The Trinobantians, being too weak to stand the onset, were cut to pieces; and Venusius, with all his family, put to the sword.

Boadicea, who had all this while stood still, and saw with pleasure the Trinobantians slaughter'd, now took the field; and, ere she march'd to the attack, order'd all the women, with their children, to sit around in waggons to behold the coming fight, so certain was she of destroying the Roman powers; while she, with her daughters, rode about in an open

open chariot : Telling her champions, as
 a great encouragement, That it was the
 custom of the Britons to be led by wo-
 men — Then exalted on a bank of
 turf, she related the injuries she had re-
 ceiv'd from the Romans ; how she was
 lash'd, and how her daughters suffer'd
 violation from the cruel officers. She
 was dress'd in a loose-bodied gown, a
 spear in her hand, and a hare in her
 bosom ; which, after she had address'd
 Andate, the British goddess, she let slip
 among them, to encourage her soldiers,
 and make 'em confident of success.

But, alas ! how vain were all her
 hopes ? for, in the first onset, her army
 gave ground ; and the Romans pressing
 upon 'em, all met the fate Venusius's
 army had just tasted. Boadicea, with her
 daughters, fled ; but, being pursu'd by
 a party of the Romans, to avoid falling
 into their hands, forc'd her daughters to
 drink poison, and then took the same
 baneful draught herself.

Thus ended this unhappy queen, and
 all her family ; whose heroic spirit can-

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not be enough applauded; nor whose pride, revenge, and implacable thirst of blood; enough condemn'd.

- Suetonius, after the many desperate attacks he had receiv'd, encamp'd with all his army upon the field of battle, and there remain'd 'till he had receiv'd from Germany one thousand horse and ten thousand foot; which additions assisted him to proceed in his conquests, and almost over-run the island.

Thus ended Boadicea; whose figure, according to Milton, "Was of stature big
"and tall; of visage grim and stern;
"harsh of voice; her hair of bright colour,
"flowing down her hips. She
"wore a plighted garment of divers colours;
"with a great golden chain; but
"ton'd over all, a thick robe."

She is call'd, by several authors, the Crafty Lioness; who give but slight account of her merit, contributing more to her passions than her judgment.

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The story is, in every particular, calculated for a dramatic performance: Especially when handled by an author, who has already given proofs of his excellence in the pathetic; and whose episode will, undoubtedly, enrich the tale.

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